**Question for written answer E-002996/2021**
**to the Commission**
Rule 138
**Piernicola Pedicini** (Verts/ALE), **Eleonora Evi** (Verts/ALE), **Ignazio Corrao** (Verts/ALE)

Subject: ‘Zero residue’, ‘residue free’, and similar food brand claims

In recent years, brands have emerged in several Member States promoting the application of ‘zero residue’ or ‘residue free’ labels to foodstuffs when residues of synthetic plant protection products are less than or equal to 0.01 mg/kg or /litre. This threshold, which is 100 times higher than that taken into account for declaring drinking water non-compliant,[1] is understood as the lower level of analytical determination despite the fact that today’s techniques are able to quantify residues below that level.

These labels suggest that the residues have been removed, but do not certify that synthetic pesticides have not been used at the production stage. Often, products do not contain zero residue, but a residue that is below the limit.

Adverse effects on human and animal health have been scientifically proven (CMR-PE, cocktail effect, etc.) even below the threshold[2] and currently, only a fraction of the thousands of authorised substances are being analysed in the EU, not to mention any undeclared co-formulants and the metabolites produced.

In view of the above, can the Commission say whether the use of the label ‘zero residue’ or ‘residue free’ to identify a product chain is in compliance with Article 7 of Regulation 1169/2011 on fair information practices, and with Regulation 1924/2006, with a view to protecting consumers from misleading food claims?

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1 Under Directive (EU) 2020/2184, the permitted quantity in drinking water is 0.10 µg/l per pesticide.

2 Laura N. Vandenberg, Theo Colborn, et al., Hormones and Endocrine-disrupting Chemicals: Low-Dose Effects and Nonmonotonic Dose Responses, Endocrine Reviews, Volume 33, Issue 3, 1 June 2012, Pages 378–455; Evanthia Diamanti-Kandarakis, Jean-Pierre Bourguignon, et al., Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals: An Endocrine Society Scientific Statement, Endocrine Reviews, Volume 30, Issue 4, 1 June 2009, Pages 293–342; Halifax Project, William H. Goodson,III, et al. Assessing the carcinogenic potential of low-dose exposures to chemical mixtures in the environment: the challenge ahead, Carcinogenesis, Volume 36, Issue Suppl_1, June 2015, Pages S254–S296.